

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

ANIMAL TRAILS AND WALKWAYS

(Ft.)

CODE 575

DEFINITION

Established lanes or travel ways that facilitate animal movement.

feet for marsh sites. For upland sites the minimum width shall be as shown in Table 1

PURPOSES

- Provide or improve access to forage, water, working/handling facilities, and/or shelter,
- Improve grazing efficiency and distribution, and/or
- Protect ecologically sensitive, erosive and/or potentially erosive sites.

TABLE 1		
Animal Type	Number of Animals	Min. Walkway Width (ft.)
Cattle & Horses	< 100	15
Cattle & Horses	100 to 200	30
Cattle & Horses	>200	40

CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES

On lands where control of animal movement is needed to facilitate access, improve grazing, prevent erosion, and/or protect ecologically sensitive areas.

The minimum width for sheep and goats shall be half of the widths shown for cattle and horses.

Trails or walkways shall be constructed in such a manner that accelerated erosion will not occur. Where necessary, diversions with a stable outlet will be provided.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

The landowner shall obtain all necessary permits prior to construction or any land clearing activities.

Animal trails or walkways shall be constructed wide enough to accommodate movement of animals and access by operator for management and maintenance. The minimum walkway top width shall be 10

Adequate water bars, culverts, bridges, or low water crossings shall be provided to control and direct water drainage where needed. All drainage structures shall meet the applicable portions of the practice standard Access Road, Code 560 and or practice standard Structure for Water Control, Code 587. The capacity for the drainage structures shall be in keeping with

sound engineering practices, but as a minimum pass the runoff determined by use of the following equation:

$$Q = CM^{5/6}$$

- Q is runoff in cubic feet per second (cfs)
- C is Cypress Creek runoff coefficient
- M is the drainage area in square miles

Sensitivity of the animal's feet, with respect to the intended purpose of the trail or walkway, will be included as a design parameter in selecting the surface material for trails or walkways.

Construction operations shall be carried out in a manner that minimizes air and water pollution and destroys as little vegetation as possible. Bare areas shall be revegetated as soon as possible after construction operations are completed.

Vegetative cover shall be established in accordance with Critical Area Planting, Code 342. Where maintaining vegetative cover is not possible, Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561 will be used to provide adequate surface protection.

Trails or walkways seeded or planted to vegetative cover will not be accessed until the vegetation is fully established and capable of withstanding grazing and/or trampling. A minimum 60% vegetative cover is required before use.

Conservation practice standard 382, Fence, will be used when needed to keep animals confined to the trail or walkway until the desired destination is reached.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Providing or Improving Access to Forage, Water, Working/Handling Facilities and/or Shelter

Trails and walkways will be designed and constructed of sufficient size to accommodate the expected frequency of use

and animal type(s) planned for the operation.

When needed to facilitate movement of animals through a series of paddocks or pastures, gate openings and lane layouts shall allow for efficient flow of animals with the least amount of stress.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Improving Grazing Efficiency and Distribution

Fenced or unfenced animal trails or walkways will be used to distribute grazing to overcome terrain features causing uneven grazing distribution and pressure.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Improving Grazing Efficiency and Distribution in Marsh Lands

In the marsh, walkways shall be located so that cattle will not have to graze more than ¼ mile (approximate) from high ground when water is on the marsh. Walkways shall be spaced approximately ½ mile apart when two or more parallel walkways are needed in the area.

The minimum design height of the walkway shall be 2 feet above the normal marsh water elevation, with 1 ½ to 1 or flatter side slopes, and a minimum berm width of 10' from the toe of the walkway to the top of the borrow pit.

Borrow pits shall be staggered for walkways constructed in the marsh to provide grazing access from either side of the walkway.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Protection of Ecologically Sensitive Areas

Cultural resources, threatened or endangered species, wetlands, streambanks, floodways or other ecologically sensitive areas, and areas of special scenic value will be protected through the proper design of trail(s) or walkway(s).

When necessary, structures will be installed to prevent interference with natural water movement or to control salt water intrusion.

CONSIDERATIONS

Conservation Practice Standard 528A, Prescribed Grazing, can be used to further improve grazing distribution and pressure.

Other conservation practices, such as Use Exclusion, Code 472 can be used in conjunction with trails or walkways to minimize the impact on sensitive areas.

For areas of high livestock concentration, such as around ponds, tanks, troughs, or other feeding areas, use Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561.

For travelways used by vehicles or equipment for purposes other than management and maintenance of animal trails or walkways, use Access Road, Code 560.

When possible, avoid locating trails and walkways through wetlands, streams, and other low-lying areas to reduce impacts on wetlands

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for installing animal trails or walkways shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose. Plans and specifications shall include

construction plans, drawings, job sheets or other similar documents. These documents shall specify the requirements for installing the practice, including the location and the kind, amount, and quality of materials to be used.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The operation and maintenance (O&M) plan shall specify that the trails or walkways and associated practices be inspected annually and after significant storm events to identify repair and maintenance needs.

The O&M plan shall detail the level of repairs needed to maintain the effectiveness and useful life of the practice. These repairs should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Periodic grading or re-shaping trails or walkways to maintain the designed grade and dimensions,
- Periodic addition of surfacing materials where used,
- Re-seeding of areas in which the vegetation has been damaged or destroyed,
and/or
- Mending of fences and replacement of gates.

Periodic removal and management of manure accumulations will be addressed in the O&M plan.

For multiple adjacent vegetated walkways the O&M plan should provide guidance as to the rotation of walkways to allow for recovery of vegetation and for improvement of traffic -supporting conditions.